



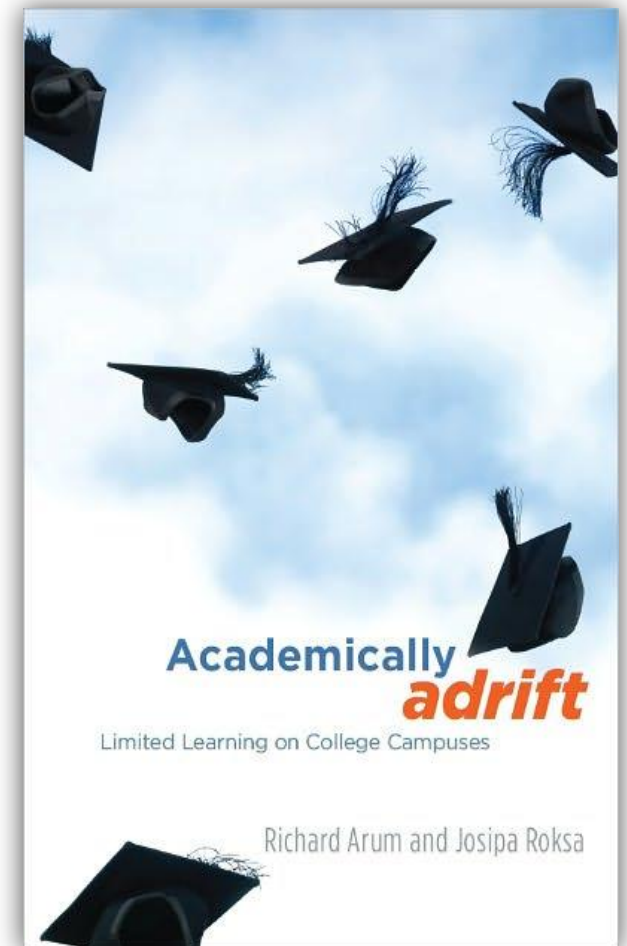
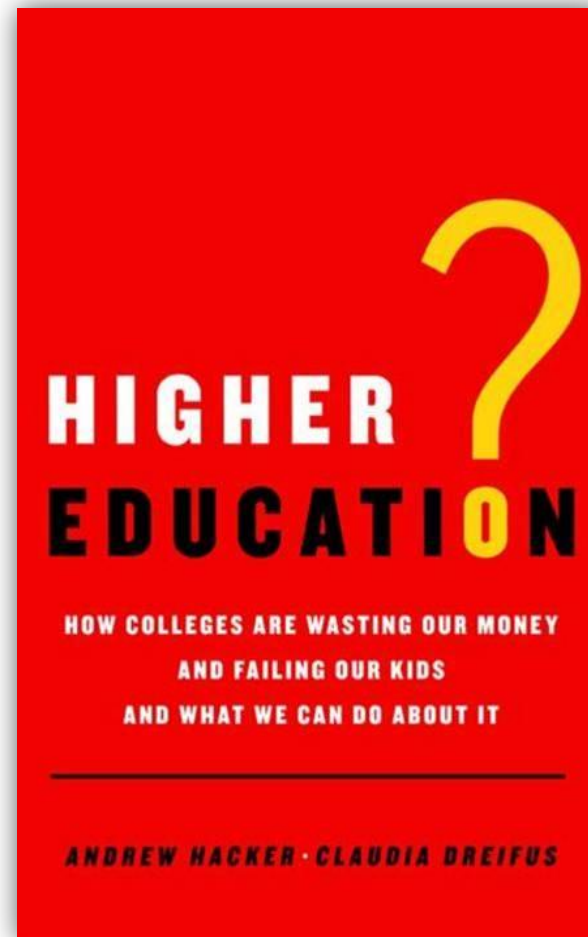
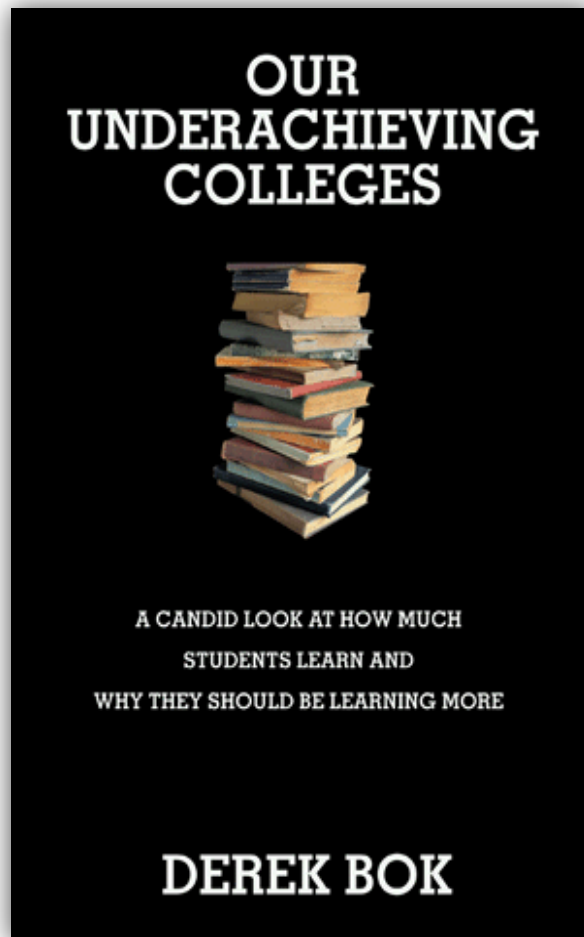
Assurance of Learning: Avoiding the Either/Or of Quantity vs. Quality

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Eastern Kentucky University

2013 Kentucky Student Success Summit

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Higher education is under unprecedented scrutiny



Today's Focus

- The Completion Agenda and Performance-based Funding
– Quantitative Measures
- The Importance of Qualitative Measures
- ECU's Emphasis on Assurance of Learning

The Completion Agenda

- Develop State completion goals
- Embrace performance-based funding
- Accelerate learning
 - Decrease time and cost of degree
 - Increase the number of degree holders
 - Decrease the needs for remediation
- Enable seamless transfer
- Reach Adult Learners - Encourage credit for prior learning

Prompted by College Completion Took Kit

US Department of Education

March 2011

Performance-Based Funding

Quantitative Metrics

- Number of degrees awarded
- Number of transfer students
- Average number of credits
- Graduation Rates
- Retention Rates

What about Quality?

How do faculty respond when asked to

- Reduce the number of hours required?
 - Reduce General Education?
 - Explain the D, F, W grades?
-

Quality

“Board members can and should ask for information about required learning on their campuses – the standards that students meet in order to earn their degrees.”

- Carol Geary Schneider, AAC&U President
“Three Questions About Learning and Quality”

Trusteeship, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Nov/Dec 2012, (p. 8)

Quality

She advocates that boards ask about the quality of their school's academic programs:

1. How strong are your expected learning outcomes?
2. Is your curriculum aligned/mapped?
3. Do you have cornerstone, milestone, and cumulative assessments?

Quality vs. Quantity

Are Quantity and Quality Mutually Exclusive?

According to some, bringing up the **quality issue** is a “good way to kill the whole thing.”

EKU's Assurance of Learning Model

- Embraces both Quantity and Quality Accountability.
- Is key to convincing faculty they are not being asked to “dumb down” their programs.
- Keeps faculty engaged in the student success agenda.
- Is an effective way, ultimately, to ensure student success.

Change the conversation from *Assessment* to *Assurance of Learning*

Identify what we value –

- a. What do we want students to know and to be able to do when they graduate?
- b. What would embarrass us if our students did not know or could not do?

Transitioning from *Assessment* to *Assurance of Learning*

Communicate expectations clearly to the campus

Every **program** will identify how it demonstrates graduates can

- (a) Think critically and creatively, and
- (b) Communicate effectively.

Each **department** will assess

- (a) Teaching effectiveness, and
- (b) Advising effectiveness.

Transitioning from *Assessment* to *Assurance of Learning*

Streamline our assessment – Remove duplication from

- General Education
- QEP
- Program Review
- Annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports
- Strategic Plan
- SACS
- Professional Accreditations

Transitioning from *Assessment* to *Assurance of Learning*

What is the Difference?

Assurance of Learning vs. Assessment: What is the Difference?

Assessment	Assurance of Learning
Asks: “How are we doing?”	Asks: “What <i>improvements</i> should we make based on how students are performing?”
Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes criteria• Designs measurements• Obtains data	Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes criteria• Designs measurements• Obtains data <i>and</i>• Takes action based on the data (“Closes the loop”)

Launching an Assurance of Learning Model

What did we want to avoid?	Goal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adding one more level of imposed reporting.• Reporting without using results for program improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure our graduates can think critically and creatively and communicate effectively.• Evaluate students' work from senior-level or end-of-program capstones.• Discover whether our graduates have the knowledge and abilities the program values. (Embedded assessment.)• Identify where in the curriculum students should learn this knowledge and these abilities.• Make adjustments (e.g., curriculum, advising, scheduling) that ensure our graduates have the knowledge and abilities we value.

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day

1. Gave a gift of time – a non-instructional Assurance of Learning Day
2. Clearly articulated the purpose/objective for the Day.
3. Started using “Assurance of Learning” (2010-2011)
4. Gained buy-in from the Deans, Chairs, and Faculty.

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day

5. Held meetings with each Dean and his/her Department Chairs in Spring 2012.
 - Distributed and discussed their student success data.
 - Showcased exemplary programs in each college that had already transitioned from assessment to the assurance of learning model
6. Continued reminding the campus of our Assurance of Learning Model (particularly Faculty Senate).
 - Framed it as “keeping our promise.”

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day

7. Was the focus of Deans and Chairs' annual retreat.
8. Maximized faculty leadership –
 - Chair of our General Education Committee.
 - Faculty who have nailed their accreditation requirements.
9. Solicited Chairs' input on the AOL Day's agenda.
10. Announced faculty-prepared video presentations available for departments to watch prior to or during the AOL Day
11. Kept focus at the program level.
12. Asked each chair for a prepared agenda.
13. Provided concurrent workshops by assurance-of-learning experts (our own faculty).

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day

14. Announced in the Spring:

**The First Annual Assurance of Learning Day,
September 26, 2012**

“Add to your syllabus for the Fall.”

15. Asked chairs to prepare “next-step” reports submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness within 24 hours after AOL

16. Compiled reports in an Institutional Effectiveness’ Executive Summary.

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day



Eastern Progress Ad

Assurance of Learning Day

Wednesday, September 26

Day classes will be dismissed.*



it's a time to review and evaluate overall student learning outcomes in their programs and to participate in workshops and use available resources to improve student learning.



it's an opportunity to begin preparing for mid-terms and to complete class homework and projects.

*Classes resume at 4 p.m.



Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day –

The outcome?

Cost – provided a box lunch or cafeteria meal

Faculty Response – almost 100 percent participation

Deans' Views – most meaningful planning day ever held

Next Assurance of Learning Day – Friday, September 27, 2013

Institutional Effectiveness' Report:

Launching an Annual Assurance of Learning Day –

Institutional Effectiveness' Report:

All departments reported meaningful accomplishments.

Over half of departments used the day for:

- Curriculum mapping
- Identifying, reviewing or revising assessment methods
- Discussing curriculum review and/or revision

Nearly half of departments used the day for:

- Creating, reviewing or revising SLO's
- Analyzing data and using results
- Revising courses
- Developing or revising scoring rubrics
- Developing or revising Capstone Course

Comments from Chairs:

“Assurance of Learning Day was invaluable. We were able to devote the entire day to the needs of students and programs. Continue the event in the future.”

“The gift of time today was invaluable - thank you!”

“Honestly, we could use an AoL day in the spring! This time was useful, invigorating, and even the skeptics among us came around. We are so rushed during the academic year, it is hard to take the birds-eye view of our programs. One day a semester is a small price to pay for meaningful evaluation.”

In Conclusion

The Completion Agenda is not an option—

Nor do we have an option for ensuring Quality.

Transitioning from **Assessment** to **Assurance of Learning** can raise the level of faculty engagement and commitment essential to student success.